



SUMMER CAMP STAFF

Working Safe With Minors



YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES
support | mentor | serve



Working with minors....

- It's a **CALL**
- It's a **PRIVILEGE**
- It's a **RESPONSIBILITY**
- It's a **COMMITMENT**

- Because our society is filled with pain, problems, and lawsuits caused by improper conduct of individuals working with children and youth, it is imperative that those working with minors have meaningful guidelines for conduct in order to protect both themselves and those under their care.





Abuse is defined as:

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect
- Bullying



Physical Abuse

- Physical injury as a result of hitting, kicking, shaking, burning, or otherwise harming a child.

Sexual Abuse

- Any situation where a child is used for sexual gratification. This may include indecent exposure, fondling, rape, exploitation through prostitution or exposure to pornographic material.



Emotional Abuse

- Any pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth, including constant criticism, threats and rejection.

Neglect

- Failure to provide for a child's basic needs.



Bullying

- It is vital that camp staff be aware of the signs of bullying in the ministry they are serving. For instance, campers who bully can be:
 - Any size
 - Any age
 - Any grade
 - Any gender



Bullying

- It is also important that camp staff know how the bullied (bully-victim) is perceived as different from other peers. For instance:
 - If they are overweight
 - If they are disabled
 - If they wear glasses
 - If they are new to camp
 - If they are weak, depressed, anxious, or less popular



What are the Types of Abuse that Do Not Involve Touching?

INCLUDE:

- Verbal comments
- Pornographic videos
- Obscene phone calls or texting
- Exhibitionism
- Allowing the child to witness sexual activity



What are the Types of Abuse that Involve Touching?

INCLUDE:

- Fondling
- Oral, genital or anal penetration
- Intercourse
- Forcible rape



What are Some of the Physical Signs of Abuse?

SOME SIGNS MAY INCLUDE:

- Lacerations and bruises
- Nightmares
- Irritation, pain, or injury to the genital area
- Unusual bleeding around the mouth or shows difficulty to swallow
- Discomfort when sitting or walking
- Torn or bloody underclothing



What are Some of the Behavioral Signs of Abuse?

SOME SIGNS MAY INCLUDE:

- Anxiety when approaching someone
- Nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- Sexual self-consciousness
- Withdrawal from ministry activities and friends
- Changes in behavior or sudden mood swings, more withdrawn-absent-distant, insecurities, depression, anxiety
- Panic attacks, sadness, fear, anger, or uncontrolled rage
- Fear of touching a certain person
- Self-destructive behaviors such as cutting, suicidal thoughts or suicide attempts



Understanding the Facts

- Campers arriving to your camp may already be victims of abuse.
- 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be the victim of sexual abuse before age 18.

What a Youth Camp Professional Team should be like?

(Group Discussion)



Interacting with...

- Parents (of campers)
- Minors
- Co-workers





Interacting with PARENTS

- Be Attentive
- Be Positive
- Be Alert
- Approach the parent, introduce yourself
- Get acquainted with the parent and the camper



Interacting with MINORS

- Supervision
- Discipline
- Touch
- Communication and Boundaries
 - Email / FB / Social Media
- Child Abused Awareness
- Reporting Child Abuse

Supervision

- So, what is appropriate supervision?
- One of the ways that camp staff can help prevent abuse is by providing great supervision of those campers under their care.
- Camp staff must pay attention to their campers during ALL activities, including the times where campers are resting and while visiting restrooms.



Supervision

- Always provide appropriate supervision
- Under NO circumstances allow yourself to be alone with one child. Always, have two people when talking to a child. This protects the child as well as protects the adult from possible allegations.
- If a counselor needs to talk to a camper alone, make sure that it is done in a public place where they can be seeing by other staff.



Supervision

- If you are dealing with a challenging camper, call for back-up so that the other staff can supervise your group while you deal with issue.
- A staff member who encounters a particularly difficult child will seek the assistance of their supervisor or administrative staff.



Discipline

- Counselor may NOT, under any circumstances, hit a child.
- Ask for help when feeling frustration with a camper.
- In all dealings with campers, counselors should strive to respond positively as opposed to reacting negatively to children.



Touch

- Do you know the difference between safe touch and unsafe touch?
- Are you aware that staff must not engage in inappropriate physical contact of any kind, including rough physical reprimand and horseplay?
- When touching a minor, do so on the hand, shoulder, or upper back;
- Affirm campers with appropriate touching by keeping hugs brief and “shoulder-to-shoulder” or “side-to-side”



Touch

- Never touch a camper in a place of the body that is normally covered by a bathing suit, unless for a clear medical necessity, and then only with supervision from another adult.
- Always keep hands at (not below) the shoulder level. For kids who like to sit on laps, encourage them to sit next to you.



Child abuse Awareness

- We cannot be too careful in the area of sexual abuse. Even the appearance of wrong or a false allegation can cause irreparable damage to the reputation of the accused staff member and the camp. All staff members must avoid doing anything that could be interpreted as abuse.



Child abuse Awareness

- Child abuse includes, but is not limited to, any contact or interaction between a child and an adult when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult or of a third person.
- The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered forced, whether or not the child has consented.



If a Child is Abused

- Believe them! Stay calm and limit the discussion.
- Support them, tell them that it was good they shared with you.
- **Report** the incident or any suspicions of abuse to the Camp Director and authorities.



Failure to Report

- Failure to report frequently results in additional crimes.
- Failure to report can cause the camp to lose the respect and confidence of it's supporting churches and local community.
- Failure to report can place the camp and the Conference in a weak, ethical and legal position.



Communication & Boundaries

Setting healthy boundaries is an important part of creating an environment where campers feel safe.

The purpose of setting healthy boundaries is to protect you as camp staff and the campers under your care.



Communication & Boundaries

- Camp staff, under no circumstances will share a bed or sleeping bag with a camper.
- Counselors must set limits with children who “cling” or hang on them.
- Camp staff must respect the privacy of campers when in locations such as changing areas, swimming pools, showers, and restrooms.
- Photographs of campers must never be taken while they are in changing areas such as a locker room or bathing facility.
- There should be no contact between a camp staff and a camper after camp has ended either on social media, text, email, or in person.



Communication & Boundaries

• **Do NOT:**

- Share personal information with campers.
- Write personal notes.
- Comment on personal appearance in an inappropriate way (“beautiful, sexy or hot”).
- Buy gifts for campers.



Co-workers

- No Dating “Minor” Staff
(under 18 years of age)

(Discuss your Camp Staff Policy)





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For more information on Camp Safety visit:

NAD Youth Safety website
<https://adventistyouthministries.org/safety-guidelines>

Adventist Risk Management, Inc.
<https://adventistrisk.org/en-us/safety-resources/camp-safety>



Safety First

HAVE A WONDERFUL SUMMER!

